

tional machinery will have to be provided for placing the names of women upon the electoral lists in the Dominion.

On subsection 2, section 1—a British subject for purposes of this Act.

Mr. MORPHY: I presume that under the rules of the House when a Bill is in Committee, one may refer to a former section. I would like to make a remark about subsection (3) of section 1, which reads:

Every female person shall be entitled to vote at a Dominion election who. . . (d) is not disqualified on account of race, blood or original nationality to vote at elections for members of the Legislative Assembly of the province in which the constituency is situate, etc.

These terms are so abstract that I think they should be defined in some way in the Act. One can hardly understand exactly what they do mean. I confess I do not. The next point I would like to make is that, in my opinion, a Franchise Act relating to the whole of Canada, so far as women are concerned, should contain within itself clearly and distinctly all the provisions which go to show in what the franchise consists and the requisite qualifications of the person who is to enjoy the franchise. I must confess that the War-time Elections Act was a very difficult one to understand. Lawyers, as well as men of business, disagreed about it; and when we consider that our election machinery must be handled throughout the length and breadth of Canada by men in rural districts, educated no doubt pretty well, but still farmers, who have to take care of the rural polls, I submit that it is the duty of this Parliament to make the Election Act as plain as possible and not as complicated as this Bill appears to be. The working out of this Bill, as I see it here now, is going to be very difficult. There are too many abstractions in it. I submit that the Act itself should contain all the factors that show in what the franchise consists. Where it depends upon the Naturalization Act, let us have the naturalization clauses put right in the Bill, so that we can get down to a complete, concrete Act that can be understood by the very commonest man in the country.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: It is a very useful form of legislation to enact by reference. I really cannot see that there should be any difficulty about working it out as this Bill prescribes.

Sir SAM HUGHES: Could the hon. First Minister work out the last Elections Act

in regard to enumerators and every thing else?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: No, I never had occasion to attempt it. I am not talking about the War-Time Elections Act, I am talking about this Act. I really cannot agree with my hon. friend from Perth (Mr. Morphy) that there is the lack of information in the Bill which impresses him. The first subsection seems to me to be tolerably clear, and I think I shall be able to show that the words which are used there have a distinct meaning within the law. However, I shall give consideration to what he has observed in that respect and shall speak further upon the matter when the Bill is next in Committee.

Mr. REDMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the committee to paragraph (c), subsection 2, section 1, giving British nationality to any woman who marries a British subject, or to any woman who qualifies on account of her father having been naturalized while she was a minor. If that is the intention of the section, it seems to me that a grammatical interpretation will not convey that idea. The subsection reads:

If, being a married woman and previously an alien, she has become a British subject by marriage, or by the naturalization as a British subject of her father while she was a minor—

Now, it seems to me that the words beginning "if, being a married woman" grammatically govern the entire clause down to the word "minor," and if the first interpretation which I gave is the correct one, then the reading would be much more clearly conveyed by striking out the words "if being a married woman" and substituting the words "if, having been previously an alien, she has become a British subject by marriage, or by the naturalization as a British subject of her father while she was a minor." In the event of that not being the intention, then it would appear that any woman acquiring British nationality through the naturalization of her father while she was a minor, and who had married either a British subject or an alien, would not acquire British nationality which would enable her to exercise the franchise.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I think there is some force in what my hon. friend has observed. It probably could be corrected by inserting the words "or, if she has become a British subject by the naturalization as a British subject of her father." I shall make a note of my hon. friend's suggestion.